

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

In Support of LD 1016

An Act Regarding the Buying and Selling of Animal Parts

PRESENTED BY: Representative Davis of Sangerville

DATE OF HEARING: April 23, 2013

Senator Dutremble, Representative Shaw and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. I am Joel Wilkinson, Colonel of the Maine Warden Service. I will be speaking in support of **LD 1016**.

In 1880 the Maine Warden Service was formed to combat commercialization of Maine's wildlife resources. Market hunters were killing deer, moose and caribou by the railcar and shipping them to nearby cities such as Boston and New York. Wildlife populations which at the time seemed limitless in our vast north-woods were drastically reduced, ultimately resulting in the extirpation of caribou from the State of Maine.

The Maine Black Bear is already part of an international black market trade in which large sums of cash are associated with their parts. Bear paws and bear gallbladders are in high demand in both international and domestic markets amongst Asian communities. Bear Paw Soup can bring in excess of \$400 per bowl and gallbladders more than \$500 a piece in the nearby medicinal Asian markets of Boston, NYC and Philadelphia. Maine is one of only 4 states which permit the open trade of bear gallbladders, which make us a trading ground and loophole for black market bears coming from New Brunswick and other more restrictive states. Additionally, antlers from trophy Maine moose and whitetail deer are part of the antler trade across the nation. Trophy Maine moose and whitetail deer antlers can bring large sums of money and the Maine Warden Service has intelligence that Maine antlers are traded in large auctions in Midwestern states as well as on the internet.

The intent of LD 1016 is to clarify confusing language which currently exists between two of our existing laws: *Buying and Selling Wildlife* and the *Hide Dealer's License* requirement. As demonstrated in the "*Exceptions*," the bill does not further restrict the individual hunter or trapper from selling specific parts of his legally hunted or trapped bear, moose and deer. Rather it targets the *commercial* purchase and sale of wildlife parts as well as *any purchase* of the aforementioned gallbladders and unfinished antlers. Additionally it allows the department to require more comprehensive reporting and tracking of the commercial purchase and sale of wildlife parts by those persons possessing Hide Dealer's Licenses.

LD 1016 will serve as a preventative measure and allows us to better regulate the purchase and sale of our highly valued wildlife resources

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time.

Note: There are two amendments the Department would like to make:

1. To meet the intent of the original bill as submitted.....the word “Commercially” in “Sec. 6 (line 26), should be removed and added to the same Sec, but at “line 29.” (i.e. **B. Commercially Buy, sell, barter.....** Thus allowing “**A. Buy, sell, barter....**” to restrict the buying of galls and unfinished antlers for personal use as well. This is a commonly used loophole.
2. On page 2 “Lines 8 and 9” should read... “*Parts bought or sold under this subsection may not be attached to wild animal **parts** or wild bird **parts** that are prohibited from being*” This prevents someone from selling a deer head with the antlers attached, a bear claw with the paw attached or a bear with the gall still inside and saying, “I am only selling the legal part, it just happens to be attached to the illegal part...” This is another commonly used loophole.